



Testimony of John D. Blair, Associate Counsel  
Connecticut Business and Industry Association  
Energy and Technology Committee Public Hearing  
Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti, Senator Formica, Representative Ferraro, members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today.

My name is John Blair, Associate Counsel at the Connecticut Business & Industry Association. CBIA is Connecticut's largest business organization, with thousands of member companies, small and large, representing a diverse range of industries from across the state. Ninety-five percent of our member companies are small businesses, with less than 100 employees.

**CBIA opposes SB 278 An Act Requiring Multichannel Video Programming Distributors to Pay a Community Access Programming Fee.**

Connecticut has some of the highest costs of doing business in the country. Among the ways state businesses overcome those high costs and compete in the global economy is utilizing our strengths of having a skilled workforce, unique products and services, and achieving greater efficiencies in the workplace.

Over the course of the pandemic we have witnessed both the struggles and resiliency of state businesses that had to adapt to once in a lifetime challenges.

One specific area we saw remarkable adjustments to BAU protocols during this period for Connecticut businesses was in the widespread adoption of virtual and online best practices in their operations. Specifically, the acceleration of Zoom and Webex meetings, telecommuting, and voice technology and other hardware upgrades in employees homes helped many businesses construct virtual offices almost overnight.

CBIA opposes SB 278 because it seeks to potentially create a new cost on those virtual offices by creating a ***first of its kind tax*** on the internet for community access programming. As the state's businesses emerge from the pandemic, now is not the time to make Connecticut the first state in the country with this internet tax.

For all of those reasons, CBIA respectfully opposes SB 278. We urge lawmakers to vote down SB 278.